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STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

WHEN I WAS INTRODUCED TO JON TARRANT, I HAD TO SMILE BECAUSE HE LOOKED SO STRUNG OUT... TRYING HARD TO LOOK AT EASE IN THE SWINGING SINGLES CLUB WHERE I'D GONE WITH FRIENDS THAT NIGHT! AT FIRST I RESENTED THE WAY HE LOOKED AT ME...
JON, THIS IS RUTH'S FRIEND, LILITH DUNNE. LILITH, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW, JON TARRANT.
YOU DON'T LIKE THE PLACE, JON. DON'T YOU APPROVE OF SINGLES CLUBS?
I FIND IT VERY DIFFERENT TO THE PLACES I GO ... BUT INTERESTING.
LOOK... IT'S NOISY HERE AND THE FOOD IS TERRIBLE. WANT TO BUY ME DINNER AT A PLACE I KNOW?
IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE, LILITH.
D-7551
FOR LOVERS ONLY

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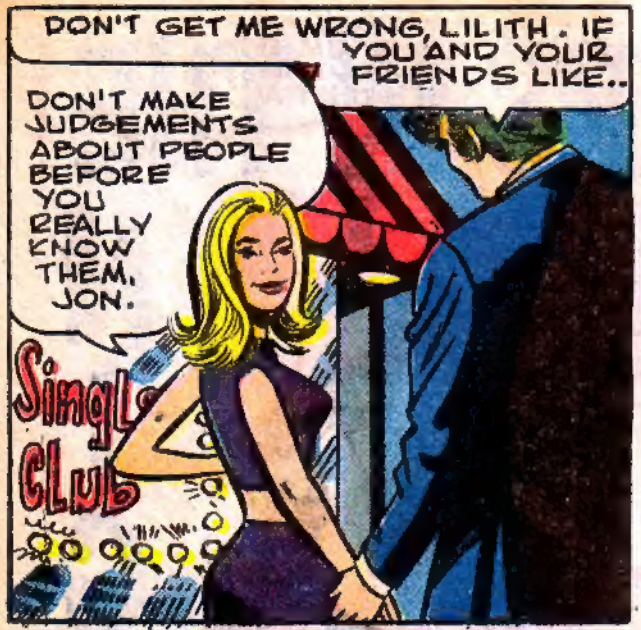
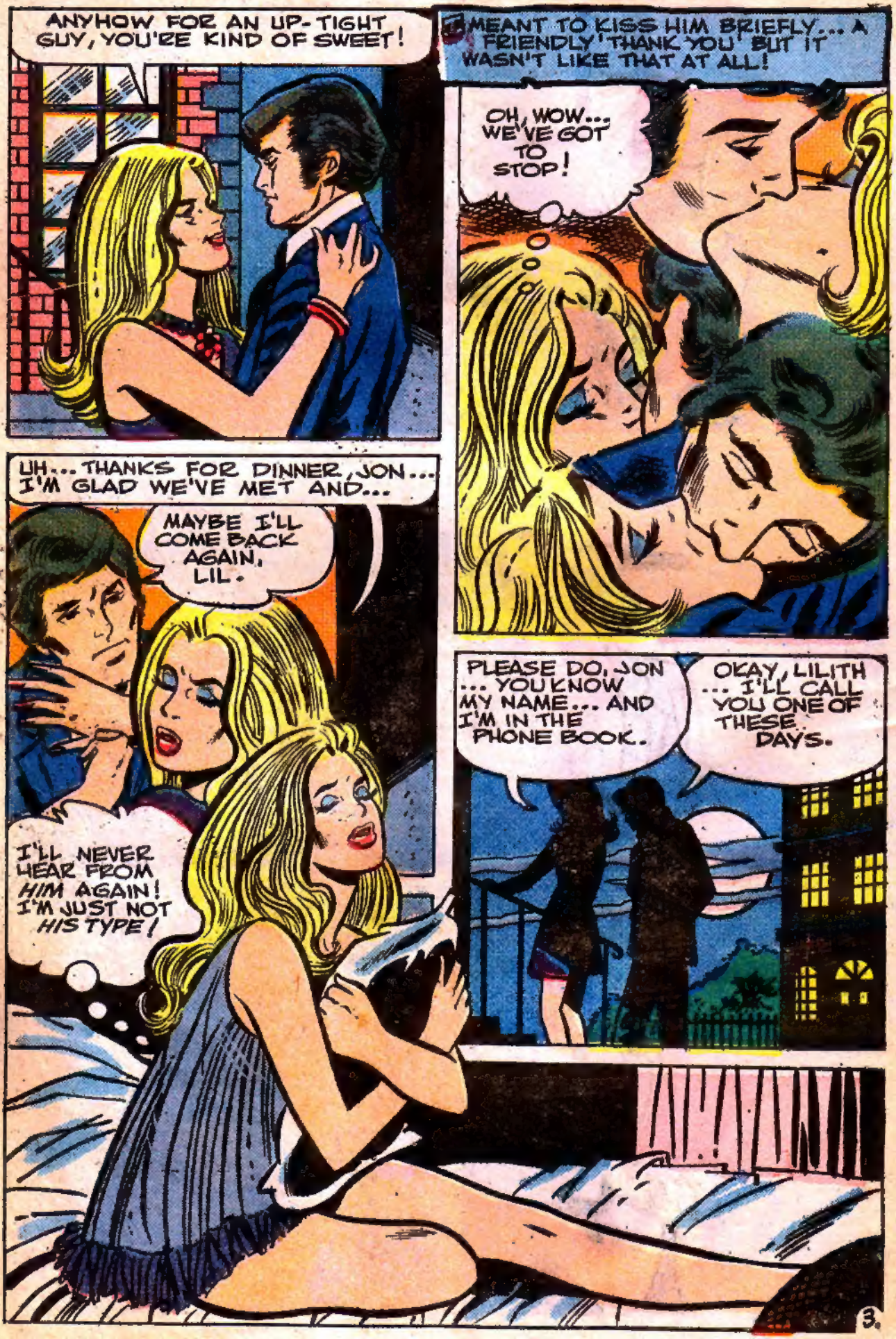
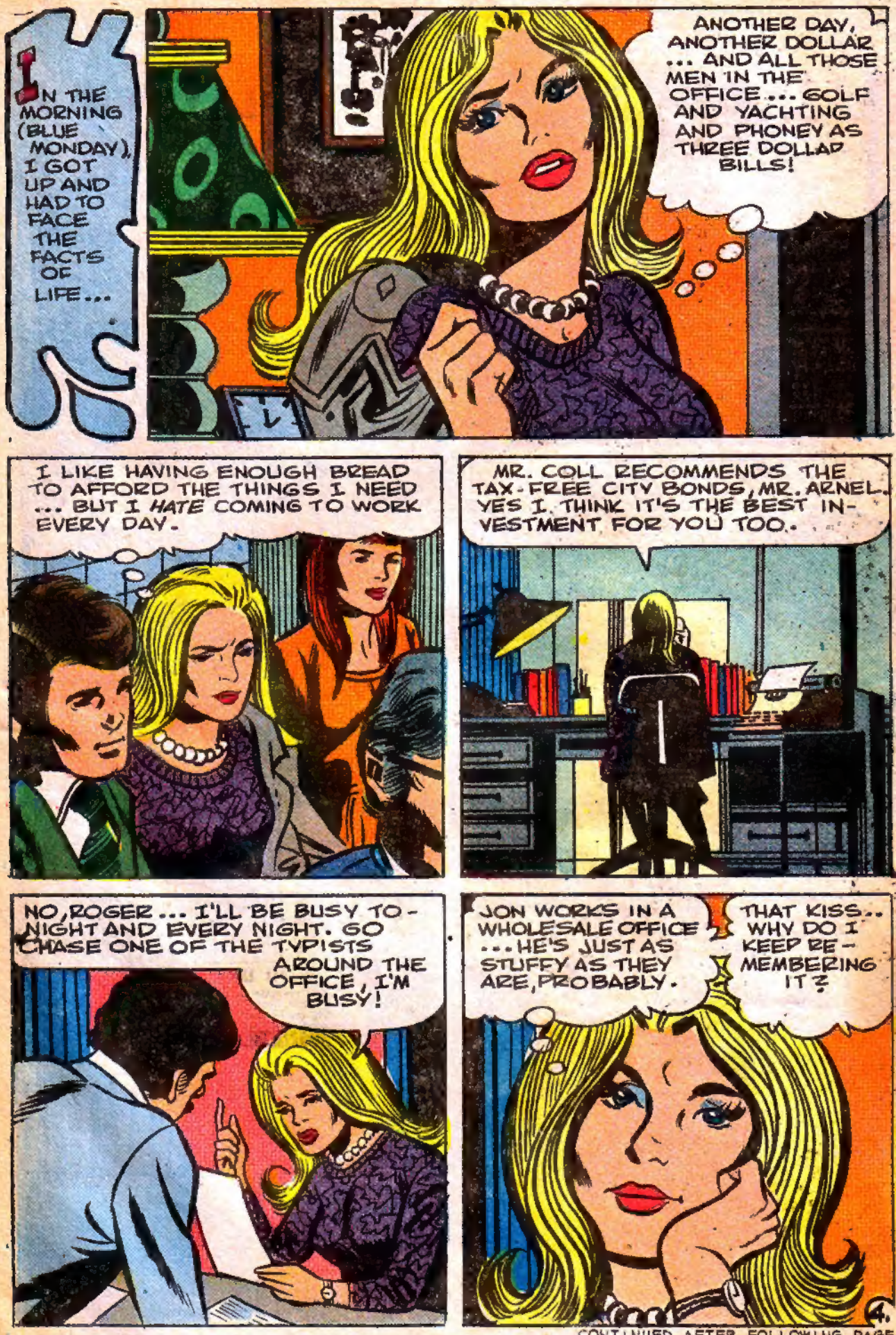

DON'T GET ME WRONG, LILITH. IF YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS LIKE..
DON'T MAKE JUDGEMENTS ABOUT PEOPLE BEFORE YOU REALLY KNOW THEM, JON.
Single Club

But Jon was uneasy. I caught him staring at me ... I knew he was comparing me with the girls he knew... who lived in Walden, a small town north of New York.

Later, Jon took me home...
I'M GLAD YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW INTRODUCED US, JONNIE. I WAS GETTING A LITTLE BORED WITH THE PEOPLE AT THE CLUB TONIGHT.
I LIKE THEM, LILITH... THEY'RE JUST NOT THE TYPE I KNOW BACK HOME.


ANYHOW FOR AN UP-TIGHT GUY, YOU'RE KIND OF SWEET!
I MEANT TO KISS HIM BRIEFLY... A FRIENDLY 'THANK YOU' BUT IT WASN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL!
OH, WOW... WE'VE GOT TO STOP!
UH... THANKS FOR DINNER, JON... I'M GLAD WE'VE MET AND...
MAYBE I'LL COME BACK AGAIN, LIL.
I'LL NEVER HEAR FROM HIM AGAIN! I'M JUST NOT HIS TYPE!
PLEASE DO, JON ... YOU KNOW MY NAME... AND I'M IN THE PHONE BOOK.
OKAY, LILITH ... I'LL CALL YOU ONE OF THESE DAYS.
3.


IN THE MORNING (BLUE MONDAY), I GOT UP AND HAD TO FACE THE FACTS OF LIFE...
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR ... AND ALL THOSE MEN IN THE OFFICE ... GOLF AND YACHTING AND PHONEY AS THREE DOLLAR BILLS!
I LIKE HAVING ENOUGH BREAD TO AFFORD THE THINGS I NEED ... BUT I *HATE* COMING TO WORK EVERY DAY.
MR. COLL RECOMMENDS THE TAX-FREE CITY BONDS, MR. ARNEL. YES I THINK IT'S THE BEST INVESTMENT FOR YOU TOO.
NO, ROGER ... I'LL BE BUSY TONIGHT AND EVERY NIGHT. GO CHASE ONE OF THE TYPISTS AROUND THE OFFICE, I'M BUSY!
JON WORKS IN A WHOLESALE OFFICE ... HE'S JUST AS STUFFY AS THEY ARE, PROBABLY.
THAT KISS.. WHY DO I KEEP REMEMBERING IT?
4.
CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

I WAITED ALL WEEK FOR HIM TO CALL... THEN, I DECIDED IF HE *DID* CALL I'D HANG UP ON HIM!

RING, YOU ELECTRONIC MONSTER... JUST SO I CAN TURN HIM DOWN.

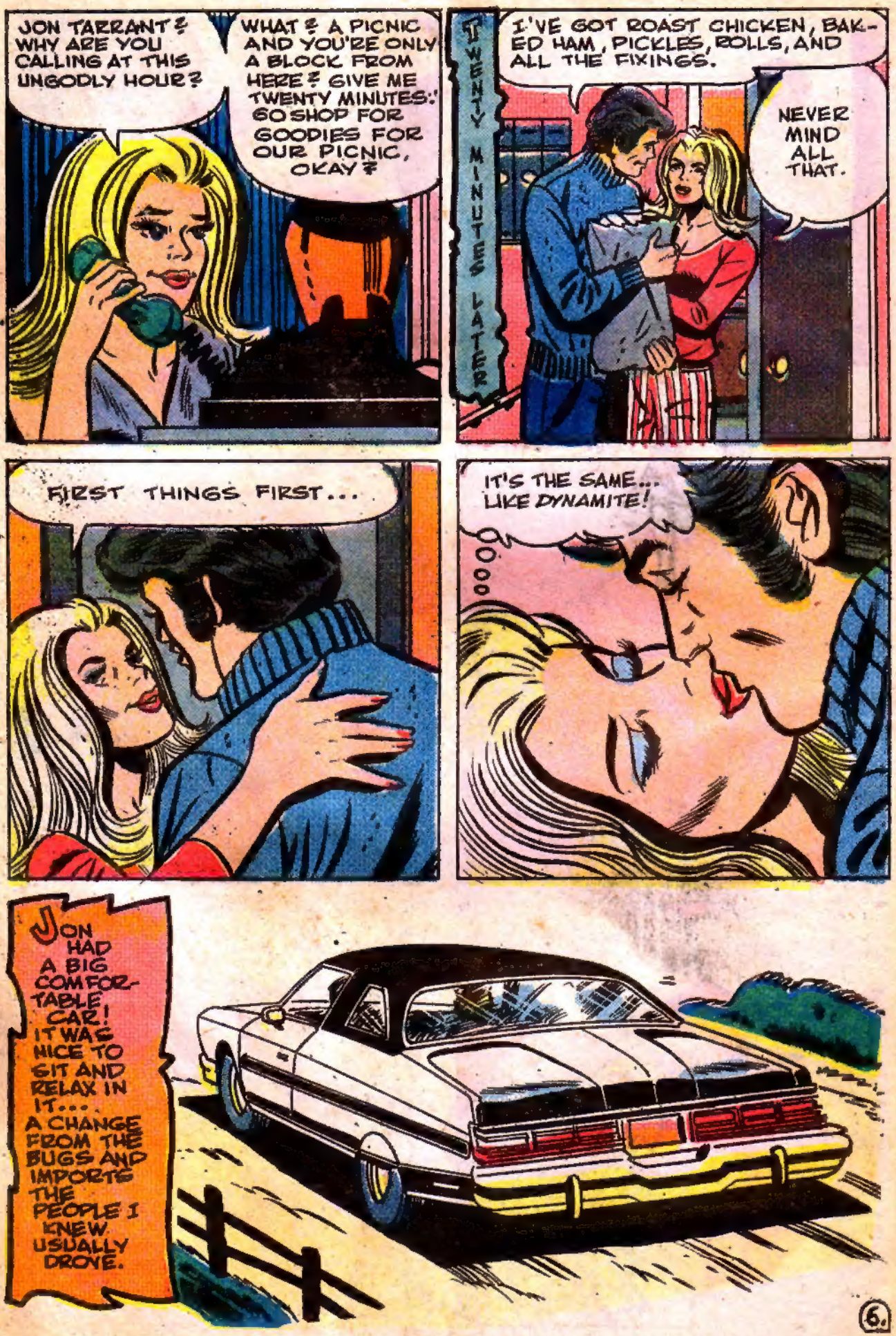
I OFTEN GO TO THE COFFEE BAR MONDAY NIGHTS... BUT I DON'T THINK I COULD TAKE THOSE SUPER COOL CHARACTERS RIGHT NOW.

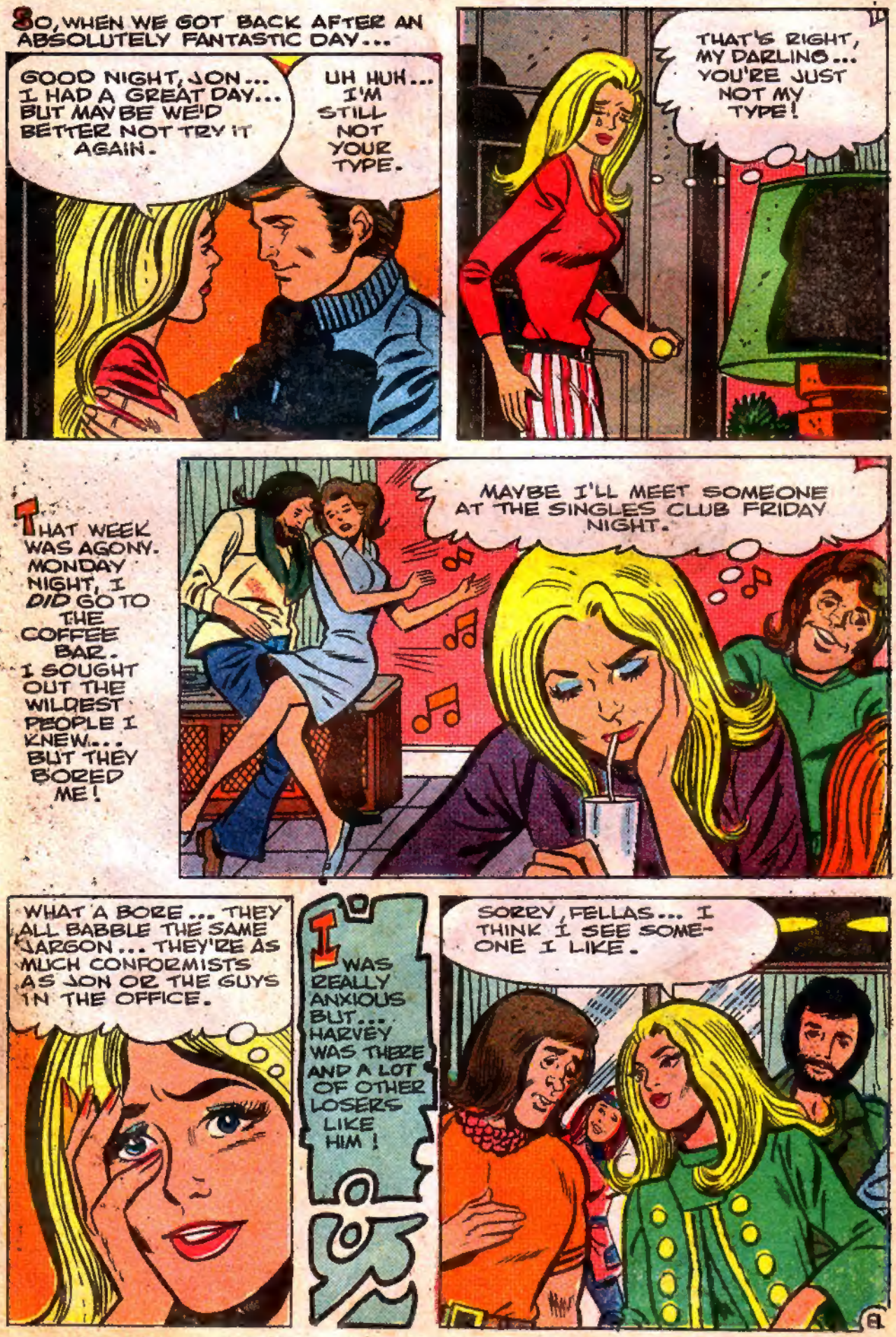
I WENT BERSERK CLEANING, WASHING, AND I EVEN READ A BOOK SATURDAY NIGHT... STILL, I DIDN'T SLEEP!

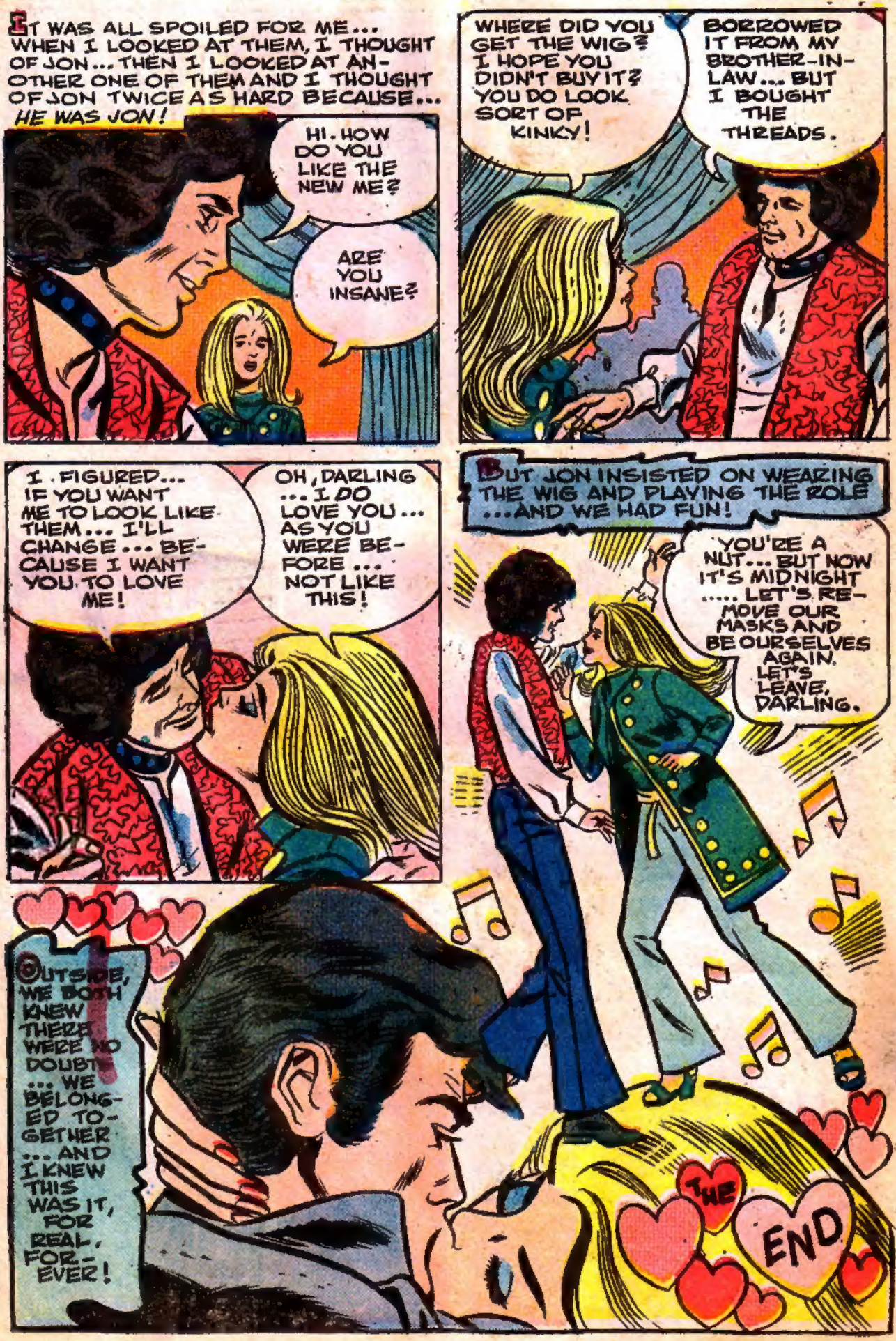
WHY COULDN'T HE STAY OUT OF MY LIFE? I NEVER THOUGHT I'D WIG OUT OVER A DRIP LIKE JON TARRANT.

AT EIGHT-THIRTY SUNDAY MORNING, AFTER I'D FINALLY DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP ABOUT FIVE, THE BLASTED PHONE RANG...

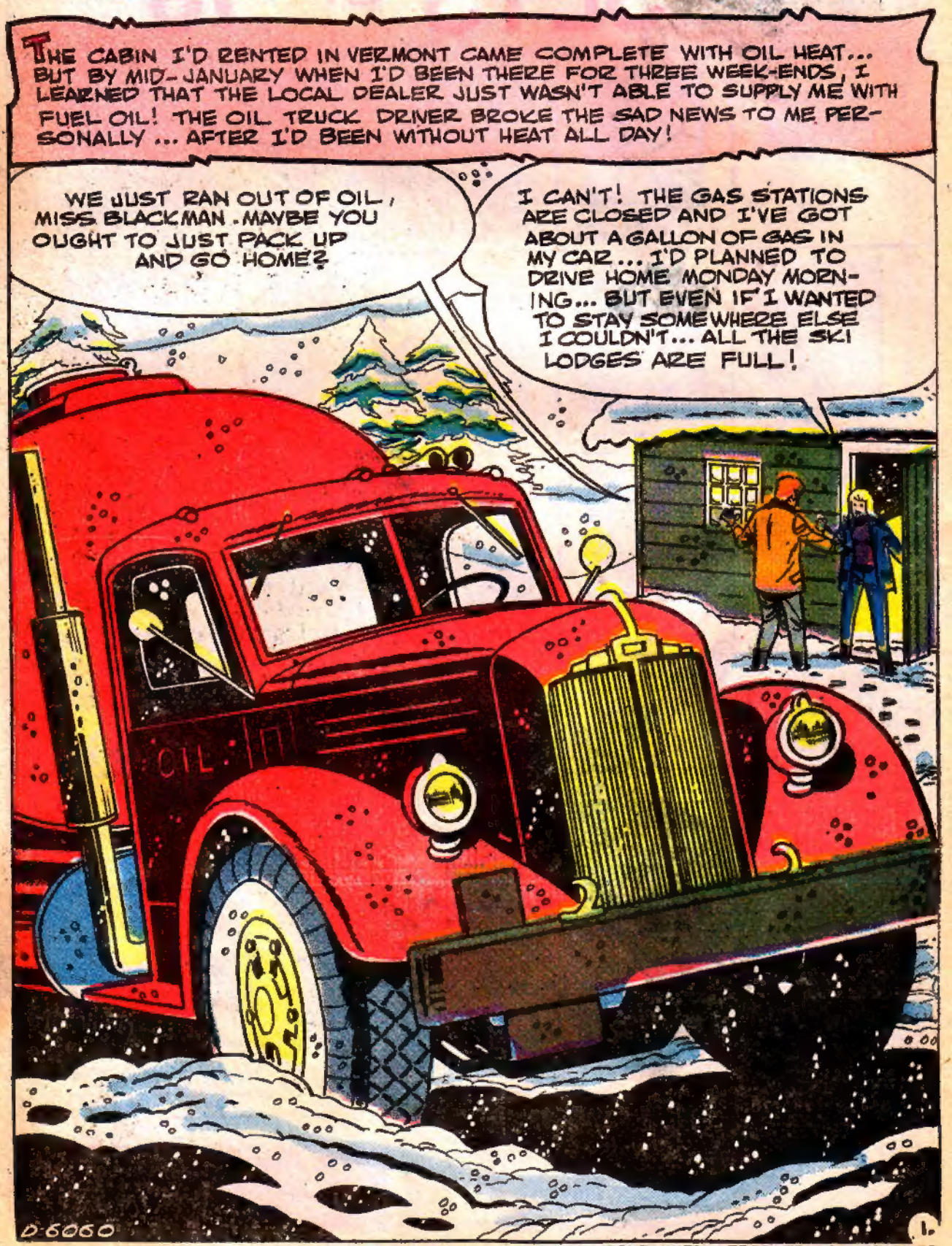
YES, THIS IS... WHO IS THIS AND *WHAT* DO YOU WANT?


JON TARRANT? WHY ARE YOU CALLING AT THIS UNGODLY HOUR?
WHAT? A PICNIC AND YOU'RE ONLY A BLOCK FROM HERE? GIVE ME TWENTY MINUTES! GO SHOP FOR GOODIES FOR OUR PICNIC, OKAY?
TWENTY MINUTES LATER
I'VE GOT ROAST CHICKEN, BAKED HAM, PICKLES, ROLLS, AND ALL THE FIXINGS.
NEVER MIND ALL THAT.
FIRST THINGS FIRST...
IT'S THE SAME... LIKE DYNAMITE!
JON HAD A BIG COMFORTABLE CAR! IT WAS NICE TO SIT AND RELAX IN IT.... A CHANGE FROM THE BUGS AND IMPORTS THE PEOPLE I KNEW USUALLY DROVE.


So, when we got back after an absolutely fantastic day...
GOOD NIGHT, JON... I HAD A GREAT DAY... BUT MAYBE WE'D BETTER NOT TRY IT AGAIN.
UH HUH... I'M STILL NOT YOUR TYPE.
THAT'S RIGHT, MY DARLING... YOU'RE JUST NOT MY TYPE!
THAT WEEK WAS AGONY. MONDAY NIGHT, I DID GO TO THE COFFEE BAR. I SOUGHT OUT THE WILDEST PEOPLE I KNEW... BUT THEY BORED ME!
MAYBE I'LL MEET SOMEONE AT THE SINGLES CLUB FRIDAY NIGHT.
WHAT A BORE... THEY ALL BABBLE THE SAME JARGON... THEY'RE AS MUCH CONFORMISTS AS JON OR THE GUYS IN THE OFFICE.
I WAS REALLY ANXIOUS BUT... HARVEY WAS THERE AND A LOT OF OTHER LOSERS LIKE HIM!
SORRY, FELLAS... I THINK I SEE SOMEONE I LIKE.


IT WAS ALL SPOILED FOR ME... WHEN I LOOKED AT THEM, I THOUGHT OF JON... THEN I LOOKED AT ANOTHER ONE OF THEM AND I THOUGHT OF JON TWICE AS HARD BECAUSE...
HE WAS JON!
HI. HOW DO YOU LIKE THE NEW ME?
ARE YOU INSANE?
WHERE DID YOU GET THE WIG? I HOPE YOU DIDN'T BUY IT? YOU DO LOOK SORT OF KINKY!
BORROWED IT FROM MY BROTHER-IN-LAW... BUT I BOUGHT THE THREADS.
I FIGURED... IF YOU WANT ME TO LOOK LIKE THEM... I'LL CHANGE... BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO LOVE ME!
OH, DARLING ...I DO LOVE YOU... AS YOU WERE BEFORE... NOT LIKE THIS!
BUT JON INSISTED ON WEARING THE WIG AND PLAYING THE ROLE ...AND WE HAD FUN!
YOU'RE A NUT... BUT NOW IT'S MIDNIGHT ..... LET'S REMOVE OUR MASKS AND BE OURSELVES AGAIN. LET'S LEAVE, DARLING.
OUTSIDE, WE BOTH KNEW THERE WERE NO DOUBTS ... WE BELONGED TOGETHER ... AND I KNEW THIS WAS IT, FOR REAL, FOREVER!
THE END

BACK TO NATURE


THE CABIN I'D RENTED IN VERMONT CAME COMPLETE WITH OIL HEAT... BUT BY MID-JANUARY WHEN I'D BEEN THERE FOR THREE WEEK-ENDS, I LEARNED THAT THE LOCAL DEALER JUST WASN'T ABLE TO SUPPLY ME WITH FUEL OIL! THE OIL TRUCK DRIVER BROKE THE SAD NEWS TO ME PERSONALLY ... AFTER I'D BEEN WITHOUT HEAT ALL DAY!
WE JUST RAN OUT OF OIL, MISS BLACKMAN - MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO JUST PACK UP AND GO HOME?
I CAN'T! THE GAS STATIONS ARE CLOSED AND I'VE GOT ABOUT A GALLON OF GAS IN MY CAR... I'D PLANNED TO DRIVE HOME MONDAY MORNING... BUT EVEN IF I WANTED TO STAY SOMEWHERE ELSE I COULDN'T... ALL THE SKI LODGES ARE FULL!
OIL
D-6060
1.

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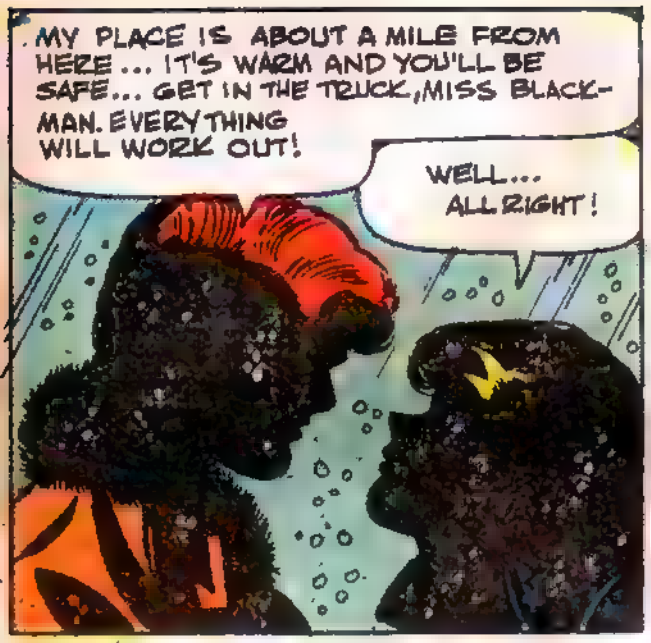
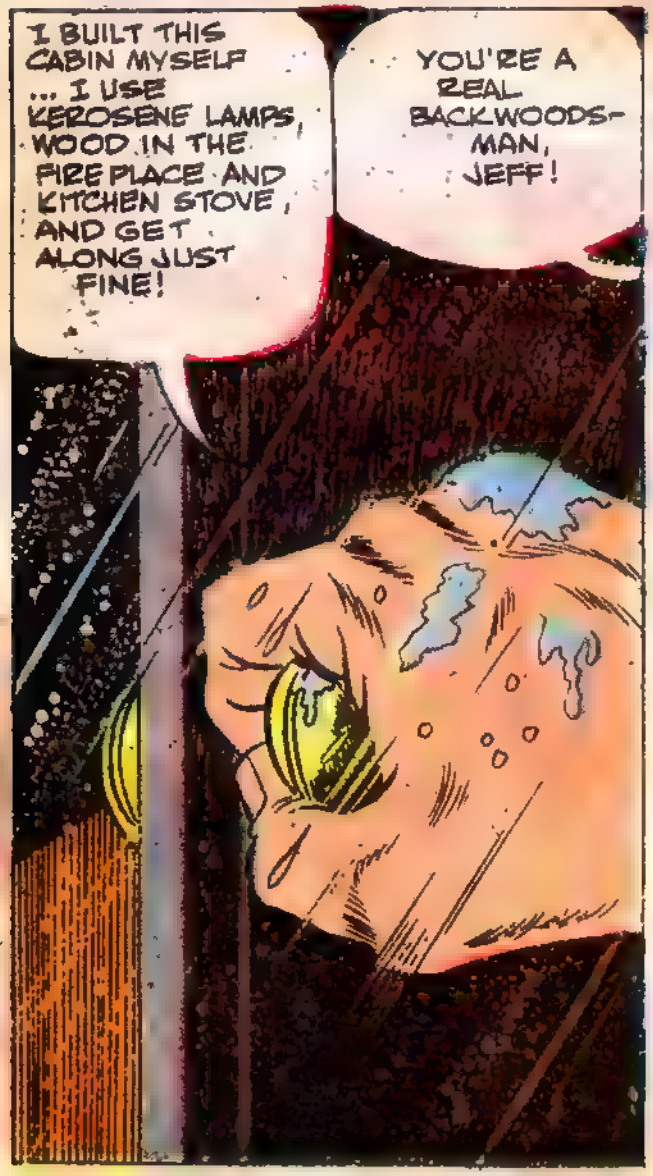
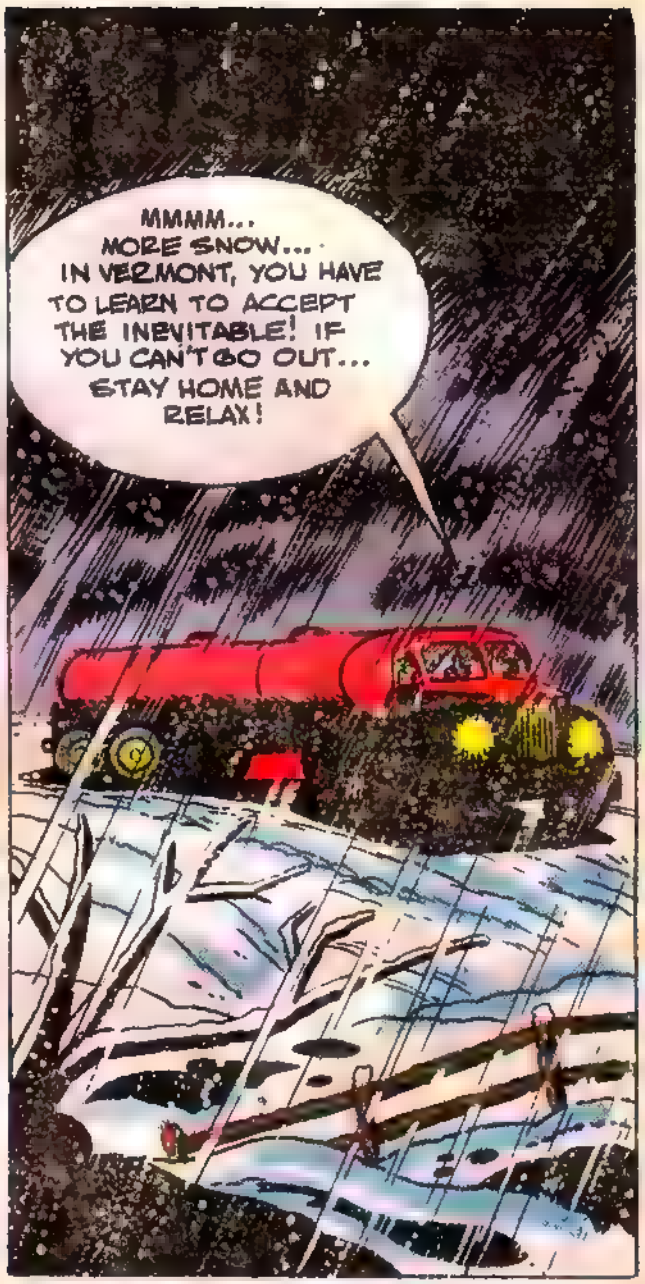
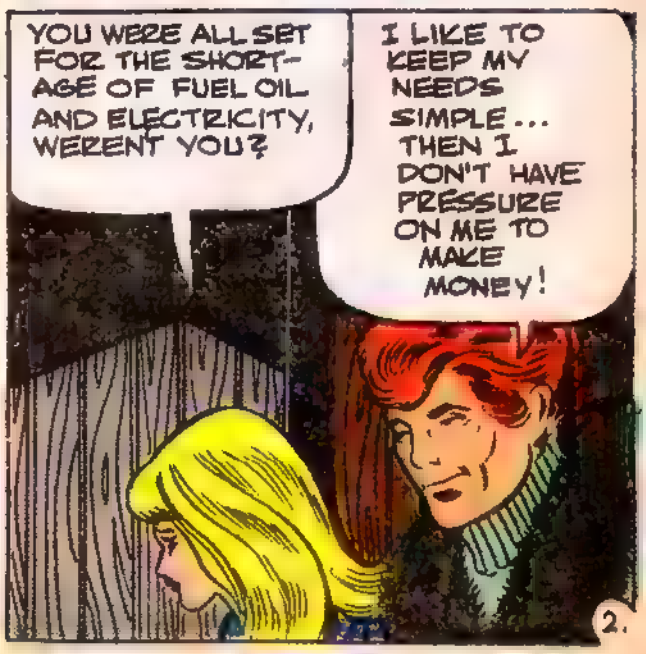

MY PLACE IS ABOUT A MILE FROM HERE... IT'S WARM AND YOU'LL BE SAFE... GET IN THE TRUCK, MISS BLACKMAN. EVERYTHING WILL WORK OUT!
WELL... ALL RIGHT!

JEFF LOMAS TOLD ME HIS NAME... HE DIDN'T HAVE AN OIL FURNACE... HE SAID HE BURNED WOOD...


I BUILT THIS CABIN MYSELF ... I USE KEROSENE LAMPS, WOOD IN THE FIRE PLACE AND KITCHEN STOVE, AND GET ALONG JUST FINE!
YOU'RE A REAL BACKWOODSMAN, JEFF!




YOU WERE ALL SET FOR THE SHORTAGE OF FUEL OIL AND ELECTRICITY, WEREN'T YOU?
I LIKE TO KEEP MY NEEDS SIMPLE... THEN I DON'T HAVE PRESSURE ON ME TO MAKE MONEY!

JEFF, YOU'RE A WRITER?
I DO SOME ARTICLES FOR OUTDOOR MAGAZINES... ABOUT FISHING, CAMPING OUT... THINGS LIKE THAT.
ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME... YOU LEAD A STORYBOOK LIFE, JEFF... A COZY CABIN...
... PLENTY OF WOOD ON THE FIRE... WARM, COMFORTABLE... IT MUST INSPIRE YOU TO GOOD WRITING!
THERE'S SOME CANNED GOODS IN THE CUPBOARD, MISS BLACKMAN ... CAN YOU COOK?
CALL ME NINA, JEFF I'LL TRY TO FIX SOMETHING!
IT WASN'T EASY COOKING ON A WOOD STOVE THE FIRST TIME EVER... BUT JEFF DIDN'T COMPLAIN WHEN IT WAS DONE!
YOU'D BE PRETTY GOOD AS A PIONEER, NINA!
I LOVE IT HERE, JEFF! IT'S QUIET AND PEACFUL...
3.

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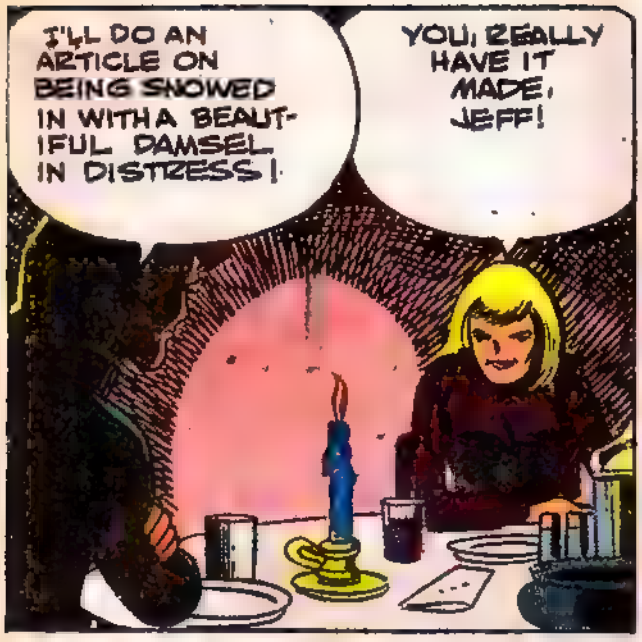
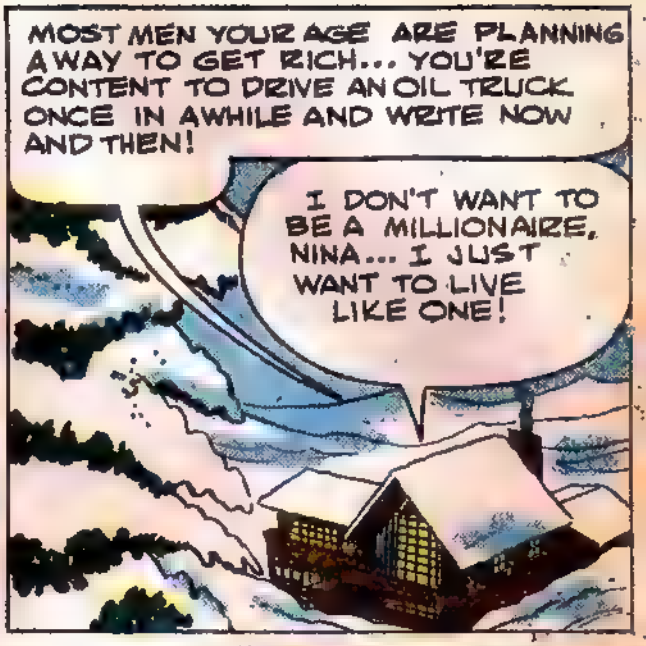
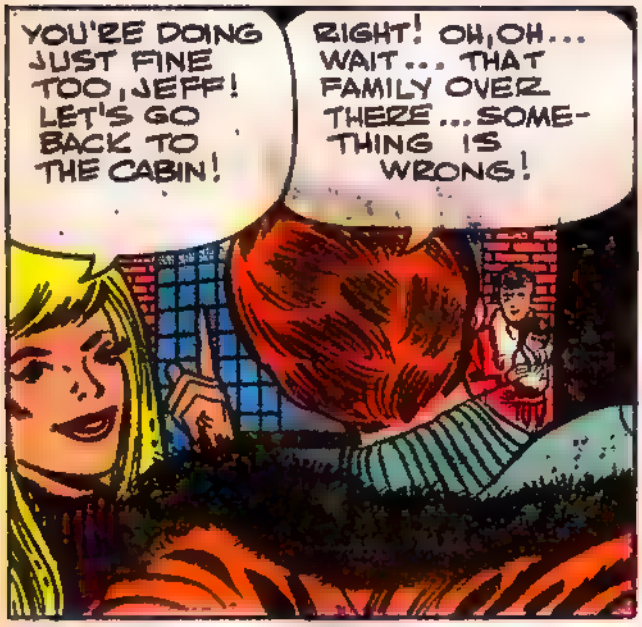
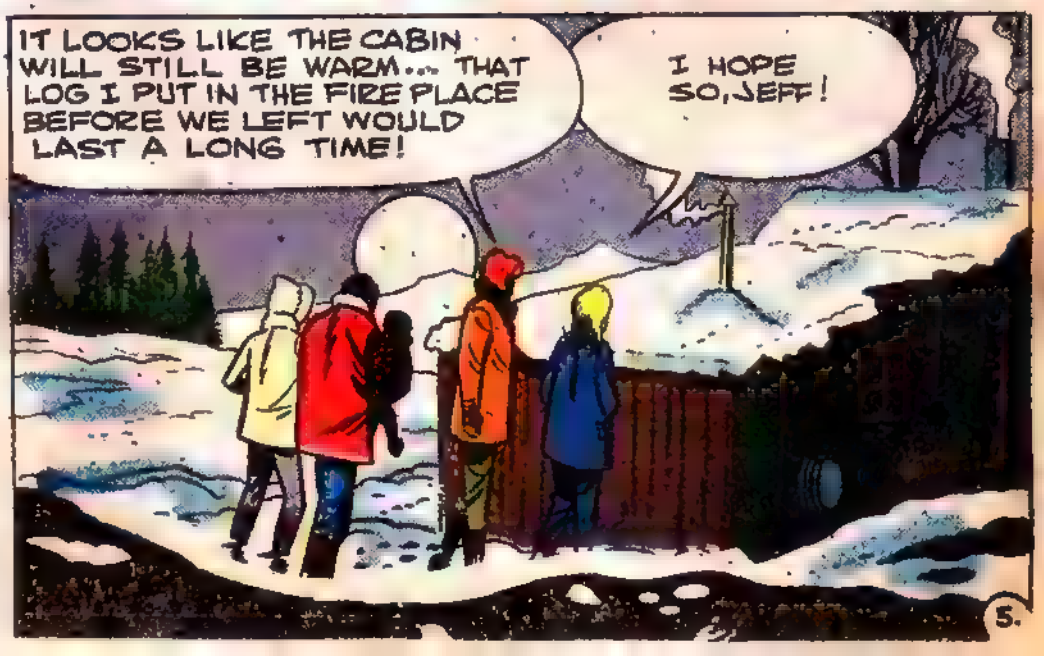



MOST MEN YOUR AGE ARE PLANNING A WAY TO GET RICH... YOU'RE CONTENT TO DRIVE AN OIL TRUCK ONCE IN AWHILE AND WRITE NOW AND THEN!
I DON'T WANT TO BE A MILLIONAIRE, NINA... I JUST WANT TO LIVE LIKE ONE!



IT SEEMED THAT THEY RAN OUT OF GAS A MILE FROM THE LODGE AND THERE WAS NO ROOMS LEFT... JEFF INVITED THEM TO SHARE THE CABIN... AND I LOVED HIM FOR IT!


IT LOOKS LIKE THE CABIN WILL STILL BE WARM... THAT LOG I PUT IN THE FIRE PLACE BEFORE WE LEFT WOULD LAST A LONG TIME!
I HOPE SO, JEFF!

I CAN'T STAY HERE FOR THE WHOLE WEEK-END, JEFF!
CAN'T YOU? WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO GO? IT'S STILL SNOWING AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE MY TRUCK TILL THE ROADS ARE CLEAR...

THAT'S WHAT WE DID! JEFF WAS REALLY GREAT ON SKIS... HE TAUGHT ME A LOT...

... I HAVE A SPARE ROOM AND IT'S ONLY A SHORT WALK TO THE SKI-LODGE... TOMORROW WE'LL WALK OVER AND SKI ALL DAY, THEN COME BACK AT NIGHT IF YOU WANT!

BY LATE AFTERNOON, WE FINISHED SKIING AND WENT TO THE LODGE!

JEFF GAVE UP HIS ROOM TO THE SMALL BOY AND HIS PARENTS... HE THREW ANOTHER LOG ON THE FIRE AND...

I'LL SLEEP OUT HERE IN A SLEEPING BAG, NINA ... YOU WILL BE OKAY IN YOUR ROOM ... GOOD-NIGHT!

WHEN THIS NIGHT IS OVER, I'LL BE LEAVING... I'LL MISS HIM... HE'S THE NICEST MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN!

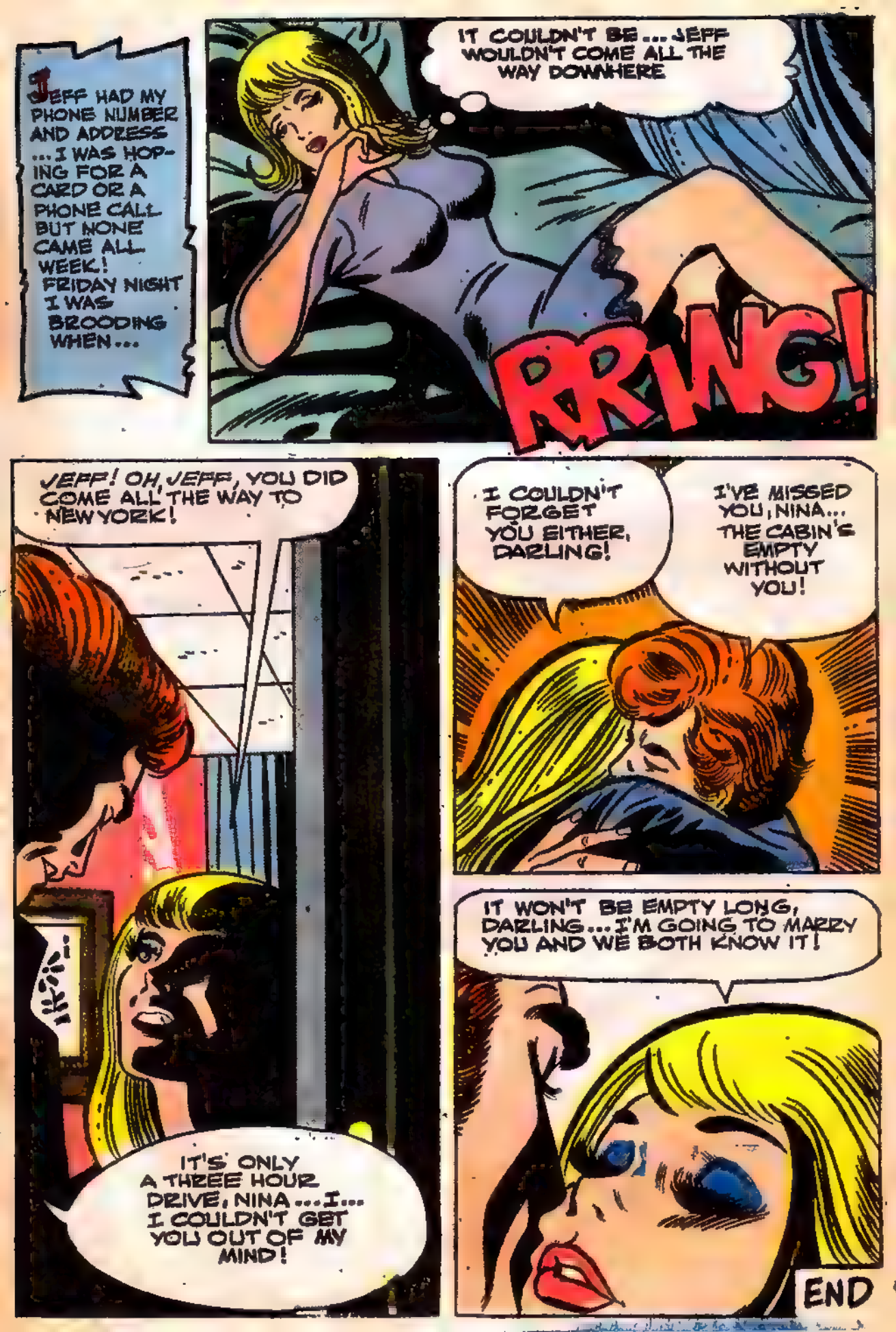
THE NEXT AFTERNOON JEFF TOOK ME TO MY CABIN... HELPED SHOVEL OUT MY CAR... THEN I FOLLOWED HIS TRUCK TO A GAS STATION THAT WAS OPEN!

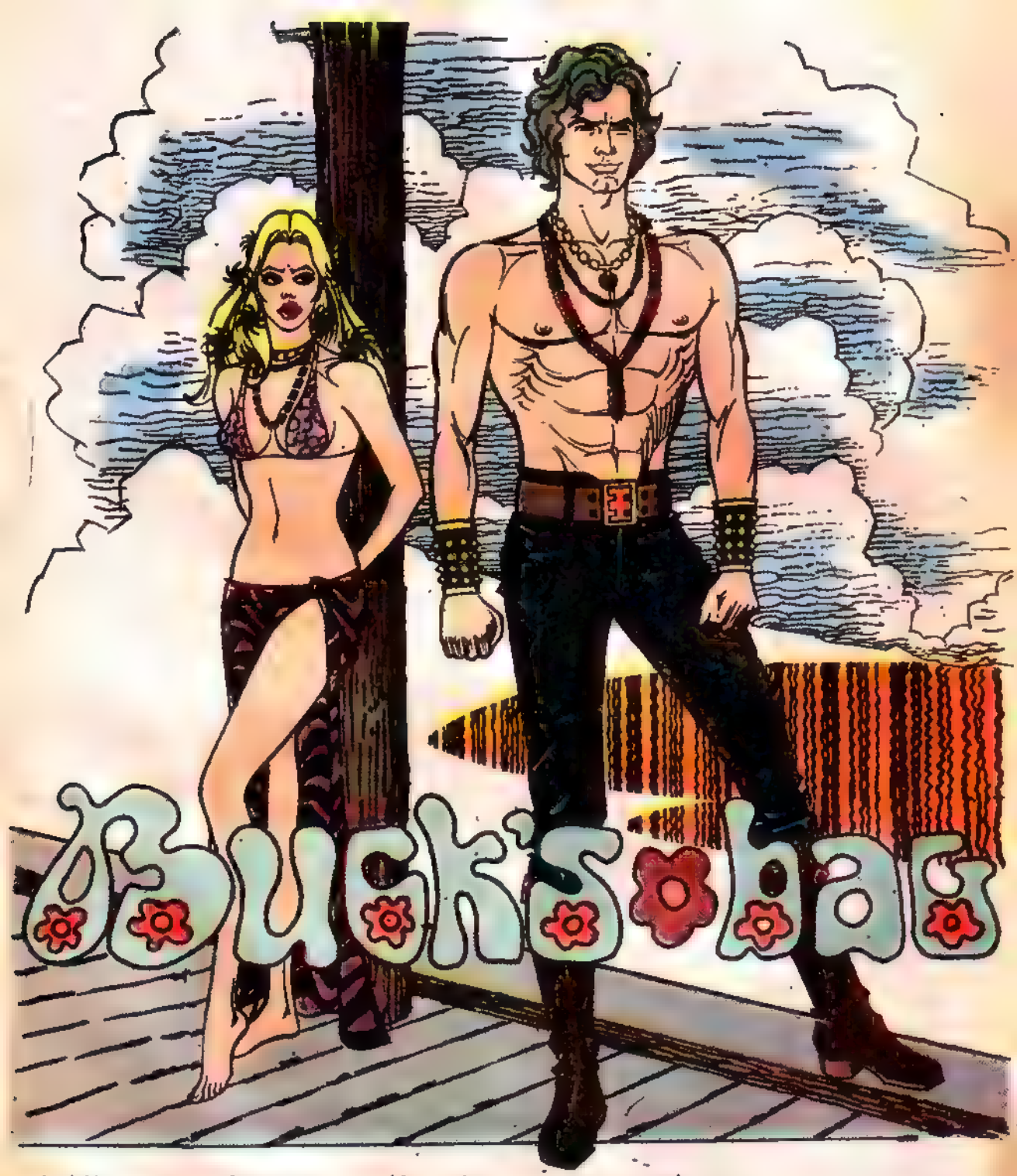
I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL COME SKIING AGAIN, JEFF... BUT WHEN I DO, I HOPE I SEE YOU...

I'LL GIVE YOU MY OIL COMPANY'S PHONE NUMBER ... LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'RE COMING!

AND AS NIGHT CAME I DROVE AWAY, SAD BECAUSE...

I'LL PROBABLY NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN ... WITH ALL THE BEAUTIFUL CHICKS AT THE LODGE, HOW LONG WILL HE BE RUNNING AROUND LOOSE?


JEFF HAD MY PHONE NUMBER AND ADDRESS ...I WAS HOPING FOR A CARD OR A PHONE CALL BUT NONE CAME ALL WEEK! FRIDAY NIGHT I WAS BROODING WHEN...
IT COULDN'T BE ... JEFF WOULDN'T COME ALL THE WAY DOWNHERE
RRRING!
JEFF! OH, JEFF, YOU DID COME ALL THE WAY TO NEW YORK!
IT'S ONLY A THREE HOUR DRIVE, NINA ...I... I COULDN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY MIND!
I COULDN'T FORGET YOU EITHER, DARLING!
I'VE MISSED YOU, NINA... THE CABIN'S EMPTY WITHOUT YOU!
IT WON'T BE EMPTY LONG, DARLING... I'M GOING TO MARRY YOU AND WE BOTH KNOW IT!
END



Buck Mason is a specialist in teen-age problems who will be writing for this publication. He has had a wide range of experience with young people, and welcomes the chance to help you with any problems you might have. Just write him a letter, stating your situation clearly and briefly, and be sure to include all important facts. Names will be withheld in all cases, and there cannot be any personal replies.

***

Dear Buck:

I am fourteen years old and like this boy who is fifteen. It all started at the beginning of school, when we started sitting together on the bus. One day he had a cigarette in his mouth, and since I can't stand boys who smoke, I didn't sit with him. From then on more and more boys started sitting with me, and this boy got jealous. He told my girlfriend to tell me something nasty from him, so I said that if he had anything to say to me, he should tell me to my face. A few days later he told me. Then he began sitting behind me on the bus, and last he gave me his picture. I don't know what to do now. I love him no matter what, so please help me if you can.

Signed,
Troubled

Dear Troubled:

From what you've told me, it's plain that he likes you, but he doesn't know how to get you as his girlfriend and hold onto you. Start setting him straight by letting him know that you won't take any bad talk from him, and that you would appreciate it if he didn't smoke in your company. If he does like you, he'll respect your wishes. (You could have avoided this whole mess if you had asked him in the beginning not to smoke when he was with you!)

Yours truly,
Buck

Dear Buck:

I need some advice. I am fourteen years old and have been going out with Billy for quite a while now. My parents don't mind me going out with boys, but the problem is they don't like Billy. They've heard rumors about him that they don't like, and they don't want me to be associated with Billy in any way. I've tried to explain to them that these things they hear aren't true, but they don't believe me. What can I do? I think I've fallen in love with Billy.

Signed,
Help

Dear Help:

If these rumors about your boyfriend aren't true, then you have to clear this up immediately with your parents before it goes too far and they forbid you to see him. Have your parents ever met your boyfriend, I mean, really talked with him? If not, then there's your first step. Once they meet him themselves, they can form their own (and let's hope more favorable!) opinion of him, and stop relying on rumors they hear from others. Remember, though, if there is any truth to these rumors, don't lie to your parents and say that there isn't, for this can only damage your relationship with your parents.

Yours truly,
Buck

Dear Buck:

Although my problem seems somewhat unusual to me, you've probably received many letters about others like it. I am ten years old and in the fifth grade. There is this boy named Frank in my class who I think has a crush on me, but I'm not sure. His sister told me that he did, but still he never talks to me or even says "hi". She says this is because he is so shy. What should I do to find out if he likes me or not?

Signed, Wondering

Dear Wondering:

Why not try talking to him? Once he finds out that you're an easy person to talk to, he may not act so shy anymore. Start by saying "hi". If you get no reaction from him, however, keep in mind that his sister may have just been teasing you. (I think it's worth a try, though!)

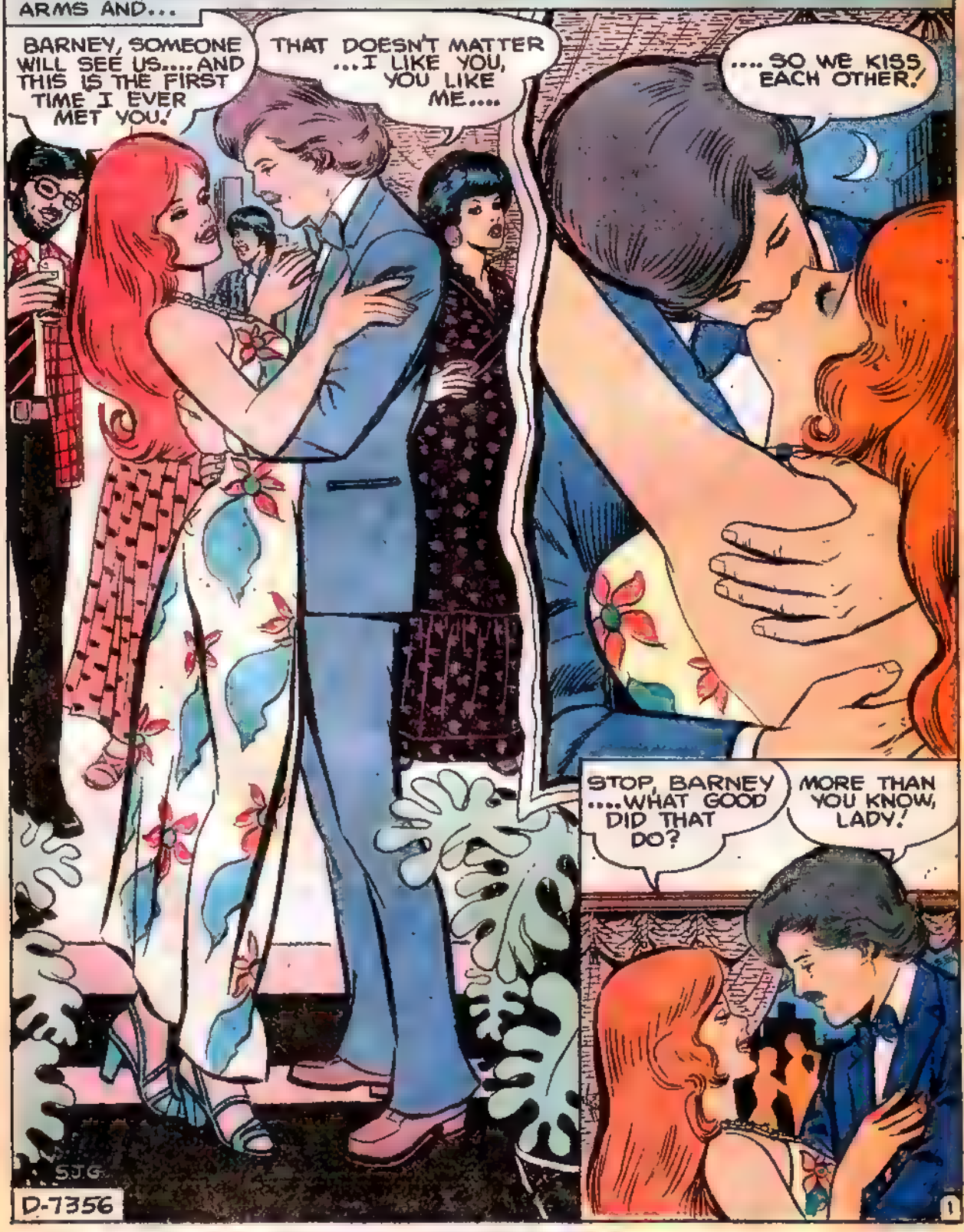
Yours truly,
Buck

***

Have a problem? Write a letter to:
Buck Mason
c/o Charlton Comics
Charlton Building
Derby, Ct. 06418

NOT MINE TO LOVE

I CAME TO THE PARTY WITH A COUPLE FROM THE OFFICE AND BARNEY REED STARTED TALKING TO ME. I LIKED HIM... MORE THAN ANYONE I'D EVER KNOWN.... BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT BARNEY TO TAKE ME IN HIS ARMS AND...


BARNEY, SOMEONE WILL SEE US.... AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I EVER MET YOU!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER ...I LIKE YOU, YOU LIKE ME....
.... SO WE KISS, EACH OTHER!
STOP, BARNEY ....WHAT GOOD DID THAT DO?
MORE THAN YOU KNOW, LADY!
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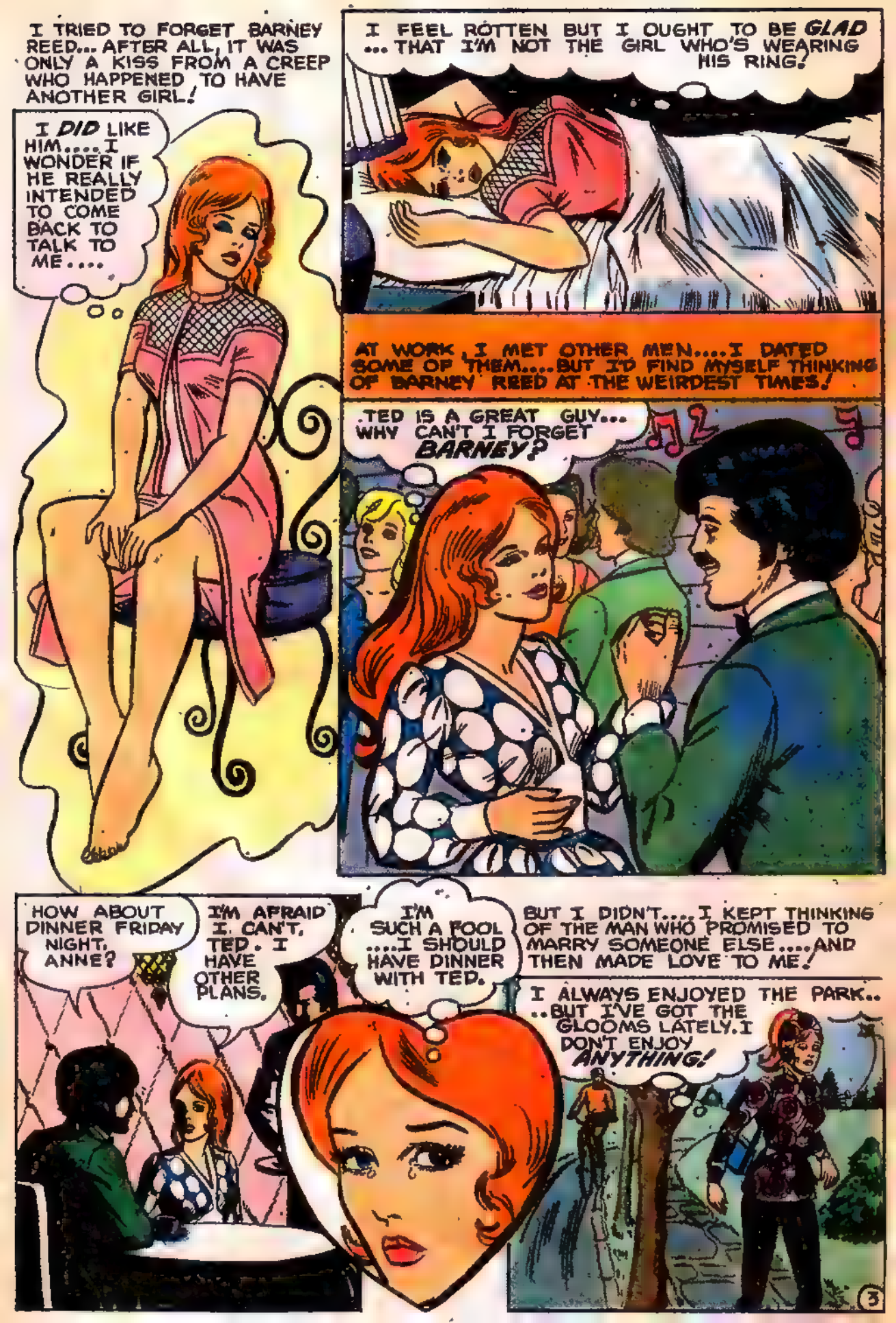
1

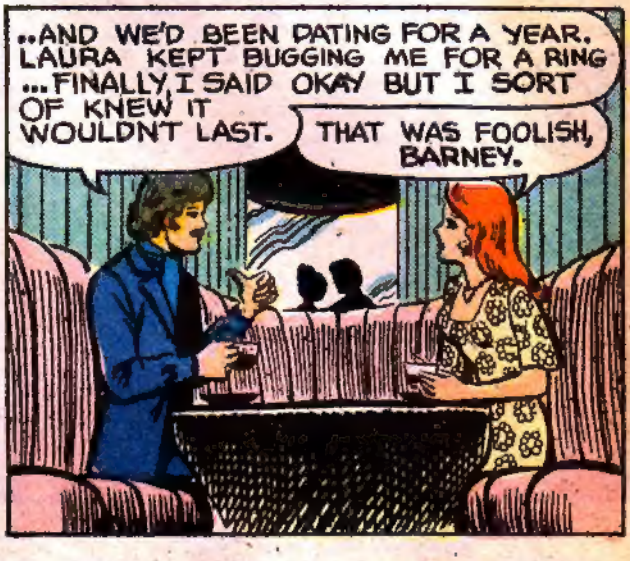
YOU WAIT RIGHT HERE... I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING WHEN I GET BACK.
I'LL BE RIGHT HERE, BARNEY.
DIDN'T I SEE YOU IN A BIG LOVE SCENE WITH BARNEY REED, ANNE?
I GUESS EVERY-ONE DID, SUSIE. CRAZY, HUH?
I HOPE LAURA DIDN'T SEE YOU. SHE MIGHT NOT LIKE HAVING SOME OTHER GIRL KISSING HER FIANCE IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF PEOPLE.
HE....HE'S ENGAGED? I DIDN'T KNOW.
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, SUSIE!
ANNE, WAIT!
I NEVER MET BARNEY BEFORE ...HOW COULD I KNOW HE WAS ENGAGED?
HE MUST BE A REAL HEEL, ANNE! I FEEL SORRY FOR ANY GIRL HE MARRIES!
2


I TRIED TO FORGET BARNEY REED... AFTER ALL, IT WAS ONLY A KISS FROM A CREEP WHO HAPPENED TO HAVE ANOTHER GIRL!
I FEEL ROTTEN BUT I OUGHT TO BE GLAD ... THAT I'M NOT THE GIRL WHO'S WEARING HIS RING!
I DID LIKE HIM.... I WONDER IF HE REALLY INTENDED TO COME BACK TO TALK TO ME....
AT WORK, I MET OTHER MEN.... I DATED SOME OF THEM.... BUT I'D FIND MYSELF THINKING OF BARNEY REED AT THE WEIRDEST TIMES!
TED IS A GREAT GUY... WHY CAN'T I FORGET BARNEY?
HOW ABOUT DINNER FRIDAY NIGHT, ANNE?
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T, TED. I HAVE OTHER PLANS.
I'M SUCH A FOOL ....I SHOULD HAVE DINNER WITH TED.
BUT I DIDN'T.... I KEPT THINKING OF THE MAN WHO PROMISED TO MARRY SOMEONE ELSE.... AND THEN MADE LOVE TO ME!
I ALWAYS ENJOYED THE PARK.. ..BUT I'VE GOT THE GLOOMS LATELY. I DON'T ENJOY ANYTHING!
3

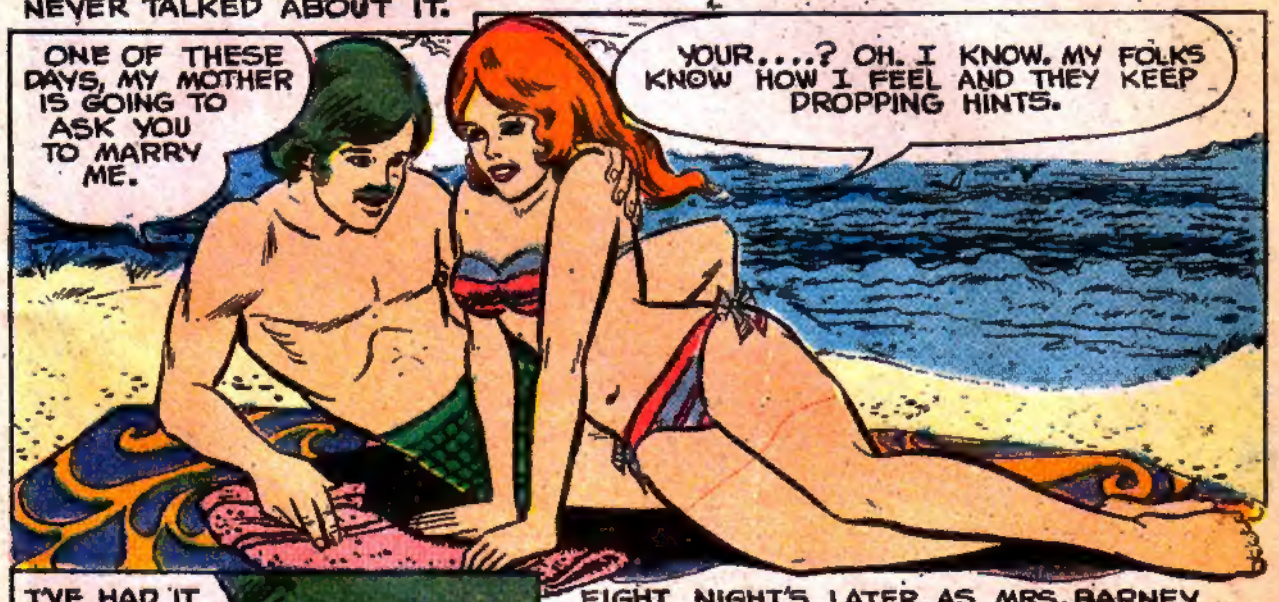
WELL....IF IT ISN'T CINDERELLA! YOU SPLIT ON ME AT KEITH'S PARTY, ANY PARTICULAR REASON?
YOU SHOULD KNOW IT BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE!
I SHOULD....? OH. YOU FOUND OUT I WAS ENGAGED, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU DON'T EVEN SEEM ASHAMED!
SHE GAVE ME THE RING BACK FRIDAY NIGHT, ANNE. BUT I'VE KNOWN FOR A MONTH SHE WASN'T GOING TO MARRY ME.
WHAT? THEN WHY LET PEOPLE THINK YOU STILL WERE ENGAGED?
IT WAS A FAVOR TO LAURA. WE'D ONLY HAD OUR ENGAGE-- MENT PARTY A COUPLE WEEKS BEFORE. SHE WAS ASHAMED TO BREAK IT TOO QUICKLY.
OH. WELL I'M GLAD I GUESS.
I WAS FEELING PRETTY GLOOMY TILL I MET YOU THAT DAY, ANNE. I'VE BEEN THINKING OF YOU EVER SINCE.
REALLY, BARNEY?
4
CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

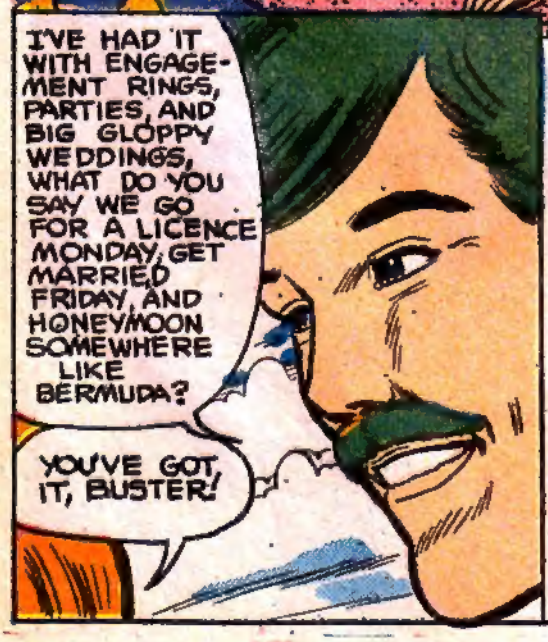
THAT'S RIGHT. NOW, WE'VE MET AGAIN, I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE TRACK OF YOU. HOW ABOUT GOING SOMEWHERE TONIGHT?
SUCH AS WHERE?
I'LL LET YOU DECIDE.
WELL, THERE'S A DRIVE-IN MOVIE THAT I MISSED AND WE CAN EAT ALL KINDS OF GOODIES THAT AREN'T GOOD FOR YOU.
BARNEY LIKED THE IDEA... AND THE MOVIE. I HADN'T BEEN TO ONE IN YEARS. IT WAS FUN!
STOP DROOLING, BARNEY. SHE ISN'T REALLY THAT BEAUTIFUL.
I'M DROOLING OVER YOU, SWEETIE!
DO YOU REMEMBER KEITH'S PARTY? WHEN I KISSED YOU?
WAIT A MINUTE, ROMEO. YOU'RE NOT...
HE IS!
5

WE STOPPED FOR COFFEE AFTER THE MOVIE AND BARNEY TOLD ME ABOUT HIS ENGAGEMENT.

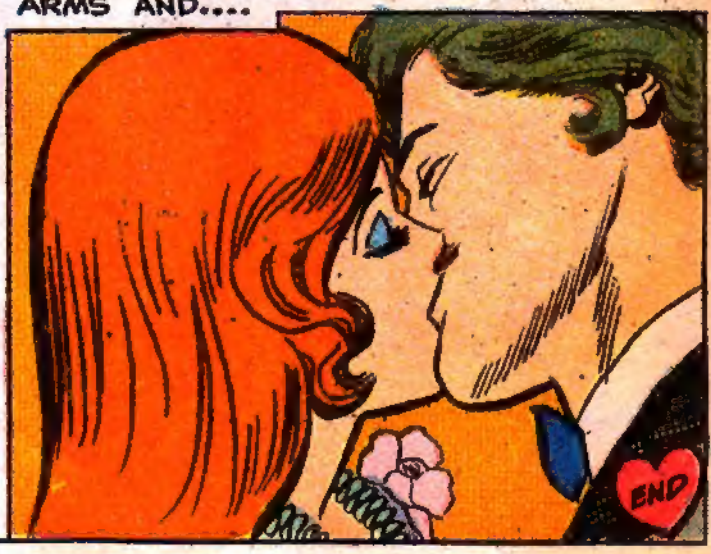

..AND WE'D BEEN DATING FOR A YEAR. LAURA KEPT BUGGING ME FOR A RING ...FINALLY I SAID OKAY BUT I SORT OF KNEW IT WOULDN'T LAST.
THAT WAS FOOLISH, BARNEY.

MONTHS LATER... BARNEY AND I WERE MAD ABOUT EACH OTHER BUT... WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT.


ONE OF THESE DAYS, MY MOTHER IS GOING TO ASK YOU TO MARRY ME.
YOUR....? OH. I KNOW. MY FOLKS KNOW HOW I FEEL AND THEY KEEP DROPPING HINTS.


I'VE HAD IT WITH ENGAGEMENT RINGS, PARTIES, AND BIG GLOPPY WEDDINGS, WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GO FOR A LICENCE MONDAY, GET MARRIED FRIDAY, AND HONEYMOON SOMEWHERE LIKE BERMUDA?
YOU'VE GOT IT, BUSTER!

EIGHT NIGHT'S LATER, AS MRS. BARNEY REED, I MELTED INTO MY BRIDEGROOM'S ARMS AND....



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